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## Address Terms among the Russian Ethnic Minority in Lithuania in Offline and Online Communication: an Emerging New Identity

Julija Korostenskiene\* and Anastasija Belovodskaja

### Abstract:

The study examines address terms (ATs) used by the Russian ethnic minority of Lithuania (RuL) focusing primarily on the vocative use of anthroponyms and on the zero vocative, including in combination with T/V forms of address. Our aim is to explore how ethnic and social characteristics of offline and online communities can influence address strategies in a multicultural environment and assess possible communicative risks. The article draws on the findings from two studies. We first present data from a survey conducted among RuL speakers examining their prevalent ATs, used alongside T/V forms, in offline communication. We then analyse ATs in the publications and comments sections in popular Facebook social network groups used by the RuL community. The study examines the speech behaviour of the RuL community in light of the geopolitical and sociolinguistic situation and seeks to determine factors influencing the choice of a particular form of address. The findings suggest that the RuL speakers present an emerging new identity of Russian speakers and have implications for future research on the enregisterment practices of ATs among Russian speakers of the post-Soviet space.

**Keywords:** address terms, anthroponyms, zero vocative, politeness, Russian, language contact, enregisterment, ethnic minority.

### Introduction

The study of address forms in the Russian-language scientific discourse is traditionally examined through the prism of speech etiquette, whereas within the English-speaking research community, the study of address takes place within the framework of the politeness theory (as evidenced through the bibliography of the International Address Research Association, INAR, <https://inarweb.wordpress.com>), the basis of which was laid by the work (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Grice, 1975; Goffman, 1967; Hymes, 1972; Lakoff, 1973; Leech, 1983), etc. Therefore, before proceeding to the analysis of address in the Russian-language discourse, some words should be said on the relationship between the concepts of speech etiquette and politeness. Within the Russian-language methodological school, the distinction is well-known, with speech etiquette viewed as part of the politeness theory and defined as “a system of rules and means of external (verbal) embodiment of politeness” (Formanovskaya, 2009: 59). At the same time, both speech etiquette and politeness are directly related to the idea of appropriateness, the analysis of which takes into account the variety of conditions in which communication takes place, i.e., the communicative-pragmatic context of the situation (Formanovskaya, 2009; Larina, 2009; cf. Fraser, 2005; Fukushima, 2015 and references there). Both schools view the communicative situation as construed by both the behavioural and the verbal planes, which each are further subdivided into a number of components, including, but not limited to, the participants’ roles within a given situation, their perception of their own identity, their evaluation of the components constituting the interaction, and a complex system of formulas underlying interaction, such as appropriateness of the politeness of a given contribution in light of the level of politeness of the entire situation, etc. (e.g. Fraser, 1990; Fukushima, 2015; Haugh, 2007; Holtgraves, 1997; Locher & Watts, 2005). Consequently, even a most carefully crafted etiquette/politeness formula that does not fit the situational context will not be perceived as polite (Larina, 2009, see also Fraser, 1990).

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Both schools agree that the communicative-pragmatic space in which the speaker and the listener interact stipulates the use of different strategies in order to demonstrate respectful attitude to the interlocutor, which is also the main intention of politeness. Accordingly, depending on the context, one can distinguish between formal, neutral and informal politeness (Larina, 2009, p. 162).

For our study, it is also important to note that linguistic choices regarded as inappropriate by members of a given group may ultimately lead the addressor to be perceived not only as impolite, but also as an outsider to the group, one who does not belong to the circle of “us”. In this regard, what is captured by the notion of *verbal behaviour* within the English-speaking tradition and *speech etiquette* within the Russian-language tradition, functions a certain password (Goldin, 1983, p. 33), which is manifested as soon as/whenever a community develops its own specific communicative strategies. The adoption of intragroup communication rules is a must for all insiders, regardless of the degree of formality / informality within the group to the effect that expected verbal behaviour is a purposeful indicator of being affiliated with the group (Formanovskaya, 2009). Thus, both the umbrella frameworks of etiquette and politeness turn out to be related to the concept of *order* as a set of rules or norms of speech behaviour adopted in a particular group or community. Following these rules results in mutual agreement along the etiquette/politeness continuum, while their non-observance ultimately leads to inappropriate or impolite behaviour (Fraser, 1990; 2005; Fukushima, 2015).

The article explores ATs as used in offline and online communication among the Russian ethnic minority of Lithuania (hereinafter RuL), viz., in their daily communication at and outside work and on the social networking platform *Facebook*, thereby also contributing to the broader field of explorations of language contacts involving Russian in the post-Soviet space (e.g. Cheskin & Kachuyevski, 2019; Mlechko, 2014; Sherkina-Lieber, 2004; Verschik, 2008, 2010<sub>a,b</sub>, 2016). While a significant body of literature has been published with respect to the mainland Russian address system, its influence on neighbouring languages with common geopolitical history is relatively unexplored, if at all (Hajek et al., 2012). Equally little is known about whether the address systems of the Russian used by ethnic minorities in these territories have undergone any subsequent changes. Focusing on the ATs used by the Russian-speaking community in Lithuania, the present study seeks to contribute to filling in the latter gap.

Taking into account the sociolinguistic context, the environment and conducive historical factors, we seek to answer the following two questions:

1. To what an extent do the forms of address of the Russian-speaking national minority of Lithuania differ from or are the same as the national-specific *norms* of address characteristic of mainland Russian?
2. To what an extent does the choice of ATs demonstrating affinity with the circle of “us” depend, on the one hand, on the degree of formality of the communicative situation, and on the other, on whether communication takes place offline or online?

To answer these questions, we examine the following:

1. We first conduct a survey on ATs used in offline communication taking place in the formal / informal setting in the presence / absence of representatives of the titular nation.
2. The data obtained in the survey are then compared with the use of ATs in online communication, focusing on two groups on Facebook, which bring together Russian-speaking residents of Lithuania. The first group is academic in nature and the communication of its participants retains a clear observance of the social hierarchy, key to the traditional notion of etiquette/politeness. The second group is an open association of permanent and temporary residents of Lithuania, the main criterion for joining the group being the ability to communicate in Russian, in which the concept of social hierarchy gives way to horizontal relations of all members of the group.

A brief mention should also be made of the terminology used in the article. As has been stated above, the analysis of ATs as used by Russian speakers in Lithuania, given the subject-matter of the article and geographic proximity to both schools, is shaped by two methodological traditions, viz. the English-speaking and the Russian-speaking. This – inevitably – leads to the necessity of making terminological choices. In this article, we use the term *address terms* to refer to ways, forms, and strategies of address employed by a given speaker community. We examine the use of ATs in light of the more narrow dimension of *speech etiquette* (the term used by the Russian school), which for us highlights the significance of selecting the appropriate AT. At the same time, rather than build any terminological dichotomies, we view *speech etiquette* within the broader (and probably somewhat less prescriptive) context of *politeness*, the preferred term of the English-speaking school. Viewed beyond this terminological hierarchy, the two terms share the same inherent property: they both focus on the “situated language use within social practices” (Agha & Frog, 2015, p. 13).

## An overview of Russian and Lithuanian strategies of address

Russian being the language of an ethnic minority in Lithuania, the inventory of ATs used by Russian-speaking residents in Lithuania in offline and online communication is naturally shaped by the following factors:

1. National and cultural peculiarities of (mainland) Russian ATs
2. Digital speech etiquette and its relationship with traditional etiquette
3. Russian in Lithuania in light of language contact

We will discuss each of these factors below.

### *National and cultural peculiarities of (mainland) Russian ATs*

Despite the fact that the phenomenon of address is recognised as a language universal, defined as a speech act for ‘calling, drawing the interlocutor’s attention in order to begin communication’ (Formanovskaya, 2007, p. 197), it is both linguistically and culturally specific and is studied as a nationally conditioned unit. Within any given culture, more fine-grained distinctions and language users’ preferences may be identified, thereby giving rise to the notion of *registers of communication*, referring to “locale-specific models of communicative conduct” (Agha & Frog, 2015, p. 14).

Russian ATs are distinguished by a variety of situationally conditioned deictic and vocative forms (see, e.g., Formanovskaya, 2007; Krongauz, 2013; Pakhomova, 2008; Shmelev, 2012; Suprun, 2010). In every communicative situation, the addresser has to decide on a specific vocative form to use, which is not only the most suitable for the social status of the communicators, but also renders the addressor’s attitude towards the addressee, as if programming them for certain actions and evaluation of the situation (see also Fukushima, 2015 and references there). The choice of ATs is closely related to the dialogue-driven nature of speech etiquette in general and its definition as a means to harmonise communication. Its significance cannot be underestimated in light of the growing levels of aggression in speech on social networks and the resulting need for measures to prevent communicative risks (Duskaeva, 2018).

The pronoun system used for address in Russian is well-known and shares a number of similarities with European ATs in general (e.g. Hajek et al., 2012; see also discussion below). Thus, T-forms are used for address in the 2nd person singular, while V-forms can be used for both the formal 2nd person singular address as well as the 2nd person plural address. Alongside the distinction of the more formal V- and the less formal T-forms, written Russian may also differentiate between the upper- and lower-case letters, the latter being the less polite/more informal option. Well-known is the specific form of AT, characterising primarily mainland Russian, viz. *name + patronymic + V-form*<sup>1</sup>. As Russian researchers note, due to the absence of neutral-status ATs in Russian, the form “full

<sup>1</sup> For conciseness, we will only refer to this form as name + patronymic in our further discussion, but will have in mind that it is consistently accompanied by a V-form.

name + patronymic” has become a normative etiquette AT in official settings (e.g., Formanovskaya, 2007; Krongauz, 1999; Suprun, 2010). Thus, in spite of the current tendency for the abandonment of the patronymic (Hook, 1984; Shmelev, 2012; Suprun, 2010), “old Russian traditions are still strong in Russian state organizations whereby seniors by age and status are to be addressed by their first name and patronymic. Clashes on this basis can result in misunderstanding and discontent” (Krongauz, 2013). Besides, researchers of Russian speech etiquette emphasise the cultural value of the AT *name + patronymic* and urge to preserve it (Formanovskaya, 2007). A form of address by the full name only, i.e. as appearing in a passport, is considered uncharacteristic of Russian speech etiquette (Shmelev, 2012).

A hypocoristic anthroponym, e.g., *Fedya* vs the full first name *Fedor*, marks a significant degree of familiarity and parity in the social status and age of the interlocutors, while the full name may be indicative of official or even strained relations (Suprun, 2010).

### ***Digital speech etiquette in relation to traditional etiquette***

Being highly pragmatic, etiquette swiftly adapts to innovations in communication and enjoys a firm presence on the internet.

As regards the communicative-pragmatic context of online communication, it should be noted that internet communication generally takes place outside those status relations that exist offline. The etiquette of offline communication is traditionally viewed as an inventory of etiquette formulas, defined as speech units that reflect the social stratification of society and indicate the place of each participant in the social hierarchy, taking into account their gender, age, social status, degree of relationship or acquaintance, etc. (e.g. Formanovskaya, 2007; Goldin, 1983; Krongauz, 1999). Meanwhile, the analysis of online communication foregrounds the integrative function of etiquette formulas employed, since they reveal and reflect the integration level of a communication participant in a given group (i.e. belonging to the circle of ‘us’) (Lazar, 2006). Moreover, all members of the group who have adopted the rules of speech behaviour in this group are equal, i.e. communication between all participants takes place horizontally. Consequently, the functions of address forms in offline and online communication are different: offline communication is primarily characterised by the differentiating function, with ATs encoding the social status of the addressee as well as their relations with the communicants. Meanwhile, ATs used in intragroup communication in online networks primarily contain essential information about the communicative norms and values adopted by the given group. Interestingly, these norms may not necessarily coincide with the traditional ideas of politeness.

### ***Strategies of address in Russian and Lithuanian***

Russian strategies of address in Lithuania are stipulated by the process of crosslinguistic and cross-cultural interference, which is closely related to the processes of globalisation and intensification of intercultural communication, and which has become particularly characteristic of internet communication. The Westernization of Russian etiquette formulas and the general style of communication has already been the focus of attention among researchers, and not only Russian-speaking ones. Thus, Rathmayr (2008) introduces the notion of the so-called New Russian politeness, which has replaced the Soviet style of communication, and which is characterised by patronymicless ATs, the latter feature also noted by some Russian researchers (Krongauz, 2013; Shmelev, 2012), who associate this process with the influence of US culture, which, as is widely known, has the tradition of using short names, “even in corporate and governmental settings. This “laid-back”, informal use is more pronounced in the West of the US, to the effect that there is a decided lack of distinction of social hierarchies.” (Dorisa Costello, p.c.). Eastern and Midwestern regions are believed to be more conservative in preserving the forms of etiquette. Dorisa Costello also notes:

*It is even a trend in baby naming now to eschew the longer, more formal name (i.e.: Robert) and legally name a child by the shortened form (i.e.: Bob or even Bobby). This latter is often in*

*the Southern US where it is paired with a connected second name (ie: Bobby Joe). Some view this as less sophisticated, but it is very common.*

While not developing this idea further, we will just note that a similar trend can be observed in Lithuanian official names to the effect that the diminutive form of the name may be used as official and appear in the person's passport (e.g. the masculine diminutive form *Laimutis* formed from *Laimis*).

The appearance of forms of addressing people, including colleagues, through the use of the hypocoristic form of the name (Suprun, 2010), as well as the non-capitalised 'you', is also associated with the same influence. All these phenomena of New Russian politeness are most clearly manifested in online communication. And yet, as far as the dissemination of the non-capitalised 'you' forms in digital communication is concerned, a purely technical explanation for such a preference seems plausible: the capitalisation of a letter presupposes an extra keystroke, while in network communication, simplicity and the speed of communication come first, which is manifested in the remarkable simplification of punctuation and spelling rules, including the rejection of capital letters not only in forms of address, but also in the use of proper names in general.

As regards the use of Russian in Lithuania in particular, one should note the influence of Lithuanian as the official language of Lithuania. Region-specific features of Russian in Lithuania have received some attention in research (see, e.g. Sinochkina, 2018 and references there), but these works have predominantly focused on deviations from the norm of the literary Russian language and preventive practices (Sinochkina, 2018).

As for the comparative studies of etiquette formulas of Russian versus other European languages (including Lithuanian), these have been primarily conducted within the framework of the theory of politeness. Thus, a comparative study of ways of expressing requests in Russian and other European languages was explored, for instance, in Ogiermann (2009) and Pajusalu et al. (2017), the latter work analysing the ways of expressing requests in Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Finnish and Russian. The question of the specifics of address in this study is raised in relation to the analysis of the frequency of T and V forms of address in formal and informal communication. The findings suggest that "the V-form was most frequent in Russian (114), and less frequent in Finnish (50). Estonian (91), Latvian (90) and Lithuanian (100) are positioned in between... The amount of informal T-forms is not greatly variable" (Pajusalu et al., 2017, p. 222). Thus, a distinctive feature of the Russian language is manifested in the tendency to maximise the use of V-forms of address in formal contexts.

Address strategies in the Russian of Lithuania have not yet been explored. Turning to this issue, one must bear in mind that the national-cultural specificity of Russian speech etiquette, presented in section 1.1 above, is in certain contradiction with the Lithuanian norms of address: there is no patronymic form in Lithuanian, but there is the vocative case and language-specific ATs.

Lithuanian employs a broad variety of ATs, allowing both for naming and convenient non-naming strategies, which all provide a safe zone for the addresser in contexts with indefinite social status and power relations between the interlocutors. In addition to the widespread T/V distinction, the Lithuanian AT inventory also includes the following:

1. The substantivised 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun *Tamsta/Tamstos*, (cf. Sp *Usted/Ustedes*). This pronoun is primarily used by people of the older generation and when addressing unfamiliar people in an official setting, but can also be used to politely address familiar people;
2. Stand-alone honorifics *Ponas/Ponia/Panele* (cf. Fr *Monsieur/Madame/Mademoiselle* (Clyne et al., 2009)), which can also be used as prefixes followed by the first name, last name, or a title (cf. Zwicky, 1974). This AT was banned from use during the Soviet period but has become a customary AT since Lithuania's restoration of independence back in 1991 (Girčienė, 2017; Petrošiūtė, 2014);

3. An adjectival participial form *Gerbiamasis* 'Respected' (masculine, nominative). The form can be changed both by gender and number and is formal and polite; other adjectives can be used, too, such as *Mielieji* 'Dear', *Malonūs* lit. 'Pleasant', both given here in the plural nominative form. In the latter two cases, the communicative distance seems to decrease and the relation between the interlocutors is less formal than with the participial adjective (see Girčienė, 2017; Petrošiūtė, 2014);
4. Institutional titles in the vocative: e.g., *Auklėtoja* (lit. *Nursing teacher*), *Viršininke* or *Pone Viršininke* (lit. *Boss* and *Mr Boss*). Thus, the forms containing references to titles are similar to the American use of *title + last name* (Brown & Ford, 1961), or *title + institutional address*, the latter being characteristic of addressing persons in high social status, e.g., *Mr Ambassador*, but are not discriminative in terms of the status of the interlocutor to the effect that the institutional titles, accompanied by the respectful prefix to *Mr/Ms/Mrs* in polite situations, which becomes the standard form of address as early as kindergarten and school. At the same time, the official use of originally diminutive Lithuanian names is quite widespread: e.g. the feminine name *Laimutė* and the masculine *Laimutis* are the diminutives from *Laima* / *Laimis*, with the diminutive suffixes *-utė/-utis* added for feminine and masculine respectively (<http://vardai.vlkk.lt>).

Generally, researchers agree on the democratisation – or loss of formality – in traditional forms of address and the increasing tendency for T-forms (Girčienė, 2017; Petrošiūtė, 2014; Schoroškaitė & Vaicekauskienė, 2019).

In work-related communication, the most neutral form of address is the first name and a V-form, which combines markers of both the formal and the informal levels of communication and thus responds to the social and media trend toward growing informality (Girčienė, 2017). This form of address is contrasted with the Soviet-era formal address by the honorific *Comrade* added to the last name and a V-form (Girčienė, 2017).

Notably, Lithuanian researchers associate changes in strategies of address primarily with the socio-political situation (cf. Johnstone et al., 2006). Thus, Petrošiūtė (2014) believes that forms of address “speak volumes about the society they are used in” to the effect that

*“changes in forms of address point to changes taking place at the political, economic and cultural levels. Forms of address reflect cultural values and are indicative of social and political transformations which bear influence on the relations between the communicants and the form of expression”* (Petrošiūtė, 2014, pp. 38-39).

Adopting this perspective, below we will briefly discuss some geopolitical and sociolinguistic issues affecting communicative strategies of the Russian-speaking minority in Lithuania.

### ***Russian in Lithuania in light of language contact***

First of all, one should point out an observable and steady tendency of the Russian-speaking population in Lithuania to eliminate signs of their ethnic identity in the public space. This situation is stipulated primarily by socio-(geo)political phenomena – a known influence factor in address studies (Clyne et al., 2006), among them the Soviet rule from 1940 to 1991 and a more recent series of geopolitical events, which have often placed Russia in a negative light on the global arena. Many post-Soviet countries, and particularly the Baltic States, have taken steps, too, to diminish the presence of Russian in the public space (Cheskin & Kachuyevski, 2019 and references there). Currently in Lithuania, “the Russianhood *a priori* is associated with non-loyalty and non-integration” (Frėjutė-Rakauskienė et al., 2018, p. 158; see also), while Russian minority leaders are perceived as impeding social development (Potashenko, 2010). Consequently, RuL speakers seek to dissociate themselves from the mainland Russian, which results in their efforts to minimise the use of Russian in the public space, opting for Lithuanian.



Elimination strategies range from the naturalisation of the individual's official name and last name by adding Lithuanian endings, to eschewing the Russian language in public and/or professional communication altogether. For example, it has been noted that in Kaunas, which is traditionally considered to be exclusively a "Lithuanian city", the Russian community "is at pains to avoid public disclosure of their identity and not to speak in their native language" (Frėjutė-Rakauskienė et al., 2018, p. 208; for the situation of Russian in Estonia, cf. Verschik, 2008).

This "tension of discourse" is further enhanced by a peculiar sociolinguistic situation in which two main trends can be distinguished.

The first trend is manifested in the widespread preference of Russian speakers to send their children to Lithuanian schools for study, so as to avoid language barriers to integrating into Lithuanian society and to create broader social ties within the Lithuanian-speaking environment, regarded as a prerequisite for securing a successful career (Frėjutė-Rakauskienė et al., 2018). As a result, as many as 70% of parents who themselves graduated from Russian schools send their children to Lithuanian ones. With Russian thus relegated solely to the private domain, Russian children consequently master only speaking and listening and face a severe drop in overall proficiency (Ramonienė et al., 2017, pp. 287-289). As for ATs, naturally, Russian children studying in Lithuanian schools will adopt the Lithuanian norms of address, while their peers in Russian schools will usually be confronted with different address practices when conversing with their teachers: they will use the patronymic addressing Russian teachers in Russian, and will opt for Lithuanian honorifics when talking with their Lithuanian teachers in Lithuanian. All these factors lead to Russian ultimately withdrawing from the public sphere.

The second trend, which is just as significant for the analysis of address strategies for Russian-language communication in Lithuania, can be defined as the de-ethnisation of the Russian language. Generally, this trend can be viewed as yet another outcome of "geographic mobility" (Johnstone et al., 2006, p. 79 and references there). In Lithuania, it has been particularly enhanced by the steady growth of the Russian-speaking population due to immigration over the past few years, primarily from Ukraine and Belarus. According to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, as of May 22, 2018, the share of immigrants from these countries was 35% of all immigrants, Russia ranking third (<http://123.emn.lt/#chart-12-desc>). The total number of foreigners living in Lithuania is dominated by citizens of the same countries: Russia (26%, or 12,810 persons), Ukraine (24%, or 11,892 persons) and Belarus (19%, or 9229 persons). This trend contributes to the de-ethnisation of Russian in Lithuania, whereby Russian becomes the language of communication for representatives of various nationalities. Russian becoming a lingua franca for such communities contributes to the potentially conflict-prone communication, which ultimately forces the interactants to develop special strategies of speech etiquette.

Against this background, the present study aims to analyse the address strategies of RuL speakers in the public and the social network spaces. In particular, we focus on the vocative use of anthroponyms and are specifically concerned with the mainland Russian standard use of the AT *name + patronymic*, which, according to Karasik, "in the republics of the former Soviet Union, was primarily associated with the coercive russification" (1991, p. 228). The study also explores the usage contexts of the so-called *zero vocative*, which is usually used in a situation where the speaker does not know how to correctly address the interlocutor and/or avoids addressing the interlocutor altogether.

## Methodology

In this paper, we focus on the anthroponyms used in the vocative function, including in combination with T/V ATs, as used in offline and online communication. We first present data from a survey conducted among RuL speakers in order to determine ATs dominating in their daily communication (including in combination with T/V forms of address). The survey was developed using Vilnius University digital tools and platform. The survey was composed of 19 multiple choice



questions and could be accessed through a link that was disseminated among members of the RuL community through social networks. Five questions were devoted to the demographics of the respondents; the remaining 14 questions solicited the respondents' preferences. All in all, 165 responses were received. During the first stage of processing, 40 responses that did not contain answers to all the questions were removed from further analysis, with the total number of completed surveys amounting to 125. The questionnaire form used in the survey is provided in Appendix 1. A quantitative approach to the data allows us to characterise the current RuL speech behaviour, and also to reflect upon the factors influencing the choice of a particular AT. The second component of the study adopts a qualitative approach and analyses publications and comments by the RuL community on the social networking site Facebook. In both instances, the objectives of the study are based on linguo-pragmatic considerations and take into account the components the communicative situation, such as the level of formality, work/non-work environment, group members, etc.

## Findings and discussion

### *A survey of RuL speakers' preferences on ATs used in Lithuania*

From February to March 2019, 165 RuL speakers aged 18-66 took part in a survey conducted using Vilnius University electronic survey creation software. Of them, 125 respondents answered all questions of the online questionnaire, and their answers were used for further analysis. Most of the respondents were born and live in Lithuania (63% of the respondents), or have lived here for more than 20 years (24%). 74% of the respondents reported having a higher education. The majority of the respondents are employed in areas that require daily interaction with representatives of different nationalities: 37% work in health care, 16% in education and science; the service sector and the creative industry employ 10% of the respondents each. As the survey data show, in a work-related environment – both official and informal – the dominant AT for RuL speakers is the *full first name + V*, which reflects the currently customary address tendency in Lithuanian mentioned above. Thus, when communicating with a Russian-speaking interlocutor at the official level in the presence of only Russian-speaking colleagues, 61% of the respondents will choose to address them by *full name and a V-form*, and only 28% will contact their colleague by their *name + patronymic*. The dominance of the form *full name + V-form* is also preserved in business correspondence: in an official letter to a Russian-speaking colleague, 52% of the respondents will opt for the address form *full first name + V*, and only 34% will address the colleague by the *name + patronymic*. In mixed environments, i.e. in the presence of both Lithuanian and Russian-speaking employees, the number of those who officially turn to a Russian-speaking colleague in Russian and by their patronymic name will drop to 8%. The majority of the respondents (39%) will choose to address their Russian-speaking colleagues in Lithuanian and by the *full first name*, or will opt for a *zero vocative*: 14% of the respondents have stated that they will do their best to avoid addressing the interlocutor by their name and will simply start a conversation with them in Lithuanian or Russian. Zero vocative is taken as a sign of the shared goal to avoid any conflicts due to the use of a marked form. Thus, 14% of the respondents have stated that they would try not to name the interlocutor in any way at all and would just address them in Lithuanian or Russian. The same tendency holds true in everyday working communication: in the presence of Lithuanian and Russian-speaking colleagues, 35% will address their interlocutor by their *full first name + V-form*, and 33% will try not to name their colleague and will contact him by a *V-form* if their interlocutor is older.

The tendency to exclude the mainland Russian AT *name + patronymic* from the official communication of RuL speakers can be explained by a number of factors. On the one hand, it is the influence of media resources that contributes to the globalisation of the name-only AT; on the other hand, it is a conscious effort of the RuL community to eschew national-specific features from circulation.

In this respect, several questions have been developed specifically to identify the degree of social involvement of the RuL community. One such question solicited information about the frequency with which the respondents followed the news in the mass media as well as the language in which

they did so. Half of the survey participants indicated that they followed news in the media on a daily basis. About 60% of the respondents follow both Russian- and Lithuanian-language media, while others get information from the media in three languages. Naturally, this trend reflects the idea of linguistic contact and unification of ATs via rejection of nationally coloured forms. On the other hand, strategies of address are significantly influenced by the geopolitical factors already described and the air of negativity associated with the image of Russians in Lithuania. Thus, 76% of the respondents (95 persons) have agreed that *the patronymic* can cause discomfort in Lithuania. 81% of the respondents (102 persons) have acknowledged that they have encountered situations when they chose to address their interlocutor by the *full first name* AT, even though they knew the patronymic of the interlocutor.

The latter is a particularly telling response. As stated earlier, RuL speakers are generally highly sensitive to any issues bringing reminders of the collapse of the Soviet Union, along with the subsequent geopolitical changes, and are at pains not to be associated with any Soviet-tainted legacy. Consequently, we took into account the fact that RuL speakers would be reluctant to express any open statements regarding their (un)willingness to use the patronymic AT, lest they should be associated with the Soviet past and, thereby, potentially revealing more sensitive information regarding their views in the course of the study. To make sure that honest responses were solicited, we selected a far more distant formulation to probe attitudes towards the patronymic, which nevertheless allows us to reflect upon the reasons for the particular response (see also below).

Furthermore, 65% of the respondents stated that they would not introduce themselves by the *name + patronymic* when meeting with another person for the first time. The figure is even higher if we add another 20% of the respondents, who indicated that they are unlikely to introduce themselves by the *name + patronymic* on their first meeting. Notably, the question about the use of the *name + patronymic* on the first meeting solicited only one response in the affirmative. Thus, while in mainland Russian the nationally coloured formula *name + patronymic*, despite the gradual replacement by the formula *full name + V-form*, is not negatively marked, as noted by Russian researchers, in Lithuania its use is eliminated altogether in order to avoid additional discomfort during communication, especially in the presence of Lithuanian-speaking interlocutors. It should also be noted that the AT *name + patronymic* is losing its status character: just over half of the respondents – 52 % (65 persons) – do not agree with the statement that the AT *name + patronymic*, if used in Lithuania, in any way emphasises the social status of their interlocutor. Instead, it is replaced by the AT *full name + V-form*, which has thus gained the status of the neutral address form in Lithuania: over half of our respondents maintain that the ATs *with* and *without* the patronymic are equivalent: 38% (47 persons) replied in the affirmative and 44% (56 persons) answered “yes, rather than no”.

This replacement is greatly facilitated by the unifying characteristics of anthroponyms: as Formanovskaya (2007, p. 210) notes, the full passport name presupposes “a certain severity of language means” and consequently address via a V-form. In this regard, the *full name* approximates the formula *name + patronymic*, the latter having no room for familiarity in interaction. It is this closeness that, in the Lithuanian communicative space, has become the basis for replacing the negatively marked AT *full first name + patronymic* with the AT *full name + V-form*. The conscious avoidance of the patronymic manifests a shared metapragmatic awareness of the preferred form among RuL speakers, which enables one to consider the *full name + V-form* as going through an initial stage (the so-called n-th order index) of the process of enregisterment (Agha, 2003; Silverstein, 2003), at the least.

The results of our survey also suggest that in their language use RuL speakers are subject, albeit to varying degrees, to the influence of Lithuanian. Thus, 77 % (96 persons) have confirmed that when communicating in Russian they sometimes switch to Lithuanian.

Finally, given the apparent changes in the address strategies of RuL speakers, we made an attempt to identify the extent to which the respondents themselves have adapted to the underlying causes of such changes. One of the questions probed into the emotional state of the respondents. Thus,

the respondents were asked whether they perceive themselves to be optimists. This question is motivated by the psychological notion of *optimism bias* with the following logic chain: a person's optimism correlates with their level of success in and acceptance by the society. Respectively, pessimism is indicative of social discomfort and at least partial rejection by the society. According to the theory of optimism bias, "people are realistic in their judgments about the average person but are unrealistic, biased or harbor illusions regarding their personal judgments" (Shepperd et al., 2002, p. 65; see also Sharot et al., 2011 and references there). Unsubstantiatedly feeling more optimistic than the objective assessment of the environment would imply is regarded as a *normal* cognitive manifestation, associated both with the mental well-being of a given person as well as with their overall level of content with the current situation (Garrett & Sharot, 2017; Helweg-Larsen et al., 2002; Taylor & Brown, 1988). On the contrary, people with a pessimist bias feel sad, are disappointed with life, at least to a certain degree, and, as if in return, are generally "less socially accepted" (Helweg-Larsen et al., 2002, p. 92). This lesser acceptance is believed to be the outcome of a particular feature of the individual that is "devalued" in the society (Helweg-Larsen et al., 2002), while the pessimist bias on the whole is related to the individual's stigmatised perspective on reality. Feeling optimistic or pessimistic has also been proven to have overt physiological manifestation (Hecht, 2013). Consequently, the continuum between the individual's mental activity and societal implications makes the two emotional states a noteworthy indicator of the level of the individual's self-perception and self-representation (the two notions also actively employed within this dimension of psychology) in the society, as well as the level of their acceptance by the society. On this view, coupled with the general sensitivity of reflecting upon preferences regarding the (non)-use of the patronymic in light of larger geopolitical issues, the perception of oneself as an optimist is believed to stand in inverse correlation with sentiments for the Soviet past and the possible hidden nostalgia (which, in fact, may be triggered by references to the Soviet times in the names of certain Lithuanian food products, e.g., Lt *Tarybine dešra* / En *The Soviet sausage*). Notably, a total of 88% (110 persons) perceived themselves as optimists, with 41% (52 persons) answering "yes" and 46% (58 persons) replying "yes, rather than no". The three questions – the (dis)comfort using the patronymic, keeping up-to-date with global news and being an optimist – are viewed as shedding light on the extent to which the respondents have been able to break free from memories of the Soviet legacy, which to this day are still present in Lithuania, or, taking a broader view, from mainland Russia, generally referred to as the ethnic homeland, and adapt in the current environment. Answers to these questions are taken to indicate that RuL speakers successfully follow a value system that is *different* from their mainland Russian counterparts (remember the aforementioned correlation between changes in ATs and changes in socio-political and cultural value systems). They also have got used to *identifying* themselves with this newer value system, which ultimately is suggestive of dissociation from mainland Russian address practices.

The results of the survey may be summarised as three focal points: 1) RuL speakers indeed largely (and decidedly) eschew the use of the patronymic in their daily communication practices; 2) RuL speakers demonstrate linguistic (and cultural) flexibility by easily switching between Russian and Lithuanian, and 3) RuL speakers have successfully adapted to changes in the environment and, in particular, ATs, and generally nurture a positive attitude towards life.

### ***A terminological digression: (Russian) ATs, speech etiquette, and the theory of politeness***

In light of the findings of the survey, the terminological distinction between politeness and *speech etiquette* vis-a-vis strategies of address deserves yet another consideration. Our findings have shown that the form of address *full name + patronymic*, which is the default and expected standard form in mainland Russia, will generally and regularly be avoided by Russian speakers in Lithuania. An interesting dichotomy emerges if we consider the implications caused by the non-observance of this AT in each case. Thus in Russia, not using the *full name + patronymic* in cases where it is expected, i.e. communicating with seniors, in official settings, or with lesser-known people, will be regarded not only as impolite (the notion directly following from the concept of *politeness theory*), but rather *disrespectful*. We see the crucial difference between being *impolite* versus being *disrespectful* in that while the atmosphere of *impoliteness* of one of the interactants comes as a more abstract and non-directed notion, in the case of someone being *disrespectful*, the attitude is

far more straightforward and most immediately concerns the addressee. Represented in a graphic form, the relation between impoliteness and disrespect would be the same as between a circle and a pointed arrow. We would also like to argue that *full name + patronymic* form of address in mainland Russian acts in a similar way as the category of *honorifics* in languages where it is available, as it seems to follow the same principle: while overtly appearing as more individualised (as opposed to, say the Spanish *Usted* or Lithuanian *Tamsta*), the *name + patronymic form*, too, serves essentially but “as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed” (Goffman, 1971, p. 56; cf. the notion of *deference* in Fraser 2005 or *situational appropriateness* in Johnstone, 2006, p. 81). The important factor here is that in the process of interaction it is *not* the *name* of the person addressed that matters, but rather *the formula* through which it has to be presented – i.e. the two-member linguistic slot filled with *a given name and a given patronymic*. Here essentially what Goffman refers to as appreciation, we understand as *manifestation of respect*; non-observance results in *manifestation of disrespect*. The question may arise: why is it then that Russian has a more personalised formula to politely refer to an interactant as opposed to languages with a single-word honorific? We believe that the answer to this question is in the emphases placed in the communication of the interactants voiced by Proshina (2008), with the Russians characterised as a “receptor-oriented” people, as opposed to the “speaker-oriented” representatives of English-speaking cultures (Proshina, 2008, p. 93, cited from Zavyalova et al., 2016, p. 114; see also Leech & Larina, 2014). While this view deserves a study of its own and cannot be fully discussed here due to space constraints, we would just like to suggest that, in light of the present discussion, the honorific is *more speaker-oriented* than the name + patronymic as in the former case, and the speaker is *exempted from the need* to even bear the name of the interlocutor in their mind. Meanwhile as regards the *name + patronymic* ATs, the speaker is under a certain “double pressure”, as they have to know both the first name *and* the patronymic to perform adequately.

To reiterate, we view the standard Russian mandatory use of the name + patronymic as the addressor's manifestation or formal acknowledgement of *respect for / appreciation of the addressee*. Meanwhile the Russian-speaking settings in Lithuania produce a strikingly different pattern: the AT *name + patronymic* will, except in very few cases, be regarded as *inappropriate*, which, we believe, *does not* bear markers of being either impolite or disrespectful. As the use, or rather, non-use of the patronymic is indexical in the sense that it has a clear differentiation as to the regional attribution of its users (mainland Russian vs Russian in Lithuania), it is this context and level of the (in)appropriateness of the patronymic that, following Silverstein (2003), we suggest be labelled as the *n*-th order indexical.

On this view, the discussion above ultimately motivates two distinctions. The first distinction concerns the use and the non-use of the patronymic form in the varieties of Russian as placed along the three-dimensional (dis)respect/ appropriateness coordinate system. The second distinction concerns the use of two umbrella terms, viz. politeness and *speech etiquette* in light of Russian strategies of address in general: the term *speech etiquette*, with its instructive implications pointed out early in the article, more readily captures the axes of (in)appropriateness and (dis)respect than the notion of *politeness*.

We will now move on to discuss strategies of address among the Russian speakers of Lithuania on the social networking site Facebook.

#### *Analysis of speech behaviour of RuL speakers on Facebook*

##### *General features of RuL communities on Facebook*

It should be noted that there is a fairly large number of groups on Facebook that position themselves as groups oriented at Russian speakers in Lithuania. Even a quick search for groups intended for Russian speakers residing in Lithuania results in as many as 10 such communities, with hardly any variation in the descriptions or names of the groups (the full list of groups and translation of all citations are given in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 respectively):

1. *Наша цель - создать крупное информационное сообщество для русскоязычных жителей Литвы, в котором каждый сможет найти ответы на интересные вопросы, познакомиться с интересными людьми, быть в курсе важных событий, узнать информацию о проходящих мероприятиях, концертах и выставках (description of the group **Русскоязычные жители Литвы** russians.lt LT RU);*
2. *Данная группа создана для того, чтобы мы с Вами общались и обменивались информацией в том числе и через социальные сети. На сегодняшний день это очень эффективный источник информации для многих... Делитесь мероприятиями, просто информацией, чтобы мы были в курсе того, что происходит в русскоязычной среде в Литве (description of the group **Вильнюс - Vilnius # Русские # Белорусы # Украинцы #**);*
3. *Группа для русских, живущих в Литве. Создана для обмена информацией в разных сферах деятельности: науке, культуре, образовании, туризме и др. А также для обмена мнениями и идеями (description of the group **Русские в Литве**);*
4. *Группа создана с целью общения и возможностью делиться информацией. Главное - оставаться людьми. Все русскоязычные добро пожаловать (description of the group **Вильнюс для всех:) [Vilnius dlia vseh])***

Given that the number of Russian speakers in Lithuania does not exceed 6% of the total population (Frėjutė-Rakauskienė et al., 2018, p. 191), such a diversity of groups, on the one hand, indicates a certain disunion within the Russian population, and on the other, contributes to creating this disunity.

To analyse the strategies of address in the network space, we have chosen the group which represents the largest RuL community on Facebook: **Вильнюс для всех:) [Vilnius dlia vseh]** (until 20 June 2019 the group was named **Русские в Вильнюсе и другие не русские:)/ Russkije/Rusai ir ne tik**). This is one of the most popular and fastest growing groups oriented at Russian-speaking residents of Lithuania in Facebook: while in March 2019 the group comprised 7411 members, by the end of March 2020, 12 100 persons have become its members. The popularity of this group is not only due to the fact that it has been the largest of the currently existing associations of Russian-speaking residents of Lithuania on Facebook for the past few years, but also because the group posts on a broad variety of topics that range from messages relevant for all group members to vibrant activities manifested by individual contributions, numerous comments and lively discussions. The description of the group is laconic:

*(1) Группа создана с целью общения и возможностью делится информацией. Главное оставаться людьми. Все русскоязычные добро пожаловать (original orthography preserved)*

As follows from the original name of the group, **Russians in Vilnius and other non-Russians :)** (**Русские в Вильнюсе и другие не русские:**), the group initially positioned itself as a group for all “speakers of Russian”, regardless of their ethnic background. Hence the knowledge of Russian is essentially deethnised. The idea of deethnisation is enhanced in the composition of the group: the group comprises representatives of various nationalities born both in Lithuania and beyond its borders, but currently residing – temporarily or permanently – in Lithuania. The level of Russian proficiency, as demonstrated in publications, is uneven: some have excelled at writing, whereas others only manifest the phonetic rendering of oral speech, which violates Russian orthography and grammar rules. Yet any indication of errors is considered to be bad tone within the group and may evoke a harsh reaction from its administrators. This stance gives group members a feeling of freedom from language control, which contributes to live communication.

In addition to the AT inventory per se, the very way in which the name of the group member is presented on Facebook reveals a number of characteristic features that are further preserved in the comments to the publications by members of this group. We would like to highlight the following: the link to the interactant’s profile, choosing between T- and V-forms, gradual loss of formality, and maintaining intimacy of communication.



### *The link to the interactant's profile*

The dominant AT is the link to the profile of the author, which pops up automatically when answering a comment. This technical feature of Facebook can presently be considered as a variant of the zero vocative when the addressor avoids choosing the form of address for various reasons: for instance, the addressor wants to invite the addressee to the group, but s/he does not have knowledge about the interlocutor, wants to maintain maximum neutrality.

Notably, as regards the use of the link to the addressee's profile so that it starts functioning as an AT, this strategy of address is closely related to the self-naming strategies adopted among the users of social networking websites in general. While these strategies deserve a study of their own, within the present discussion we will just highlight those tendencies that are directly related to using a link to the author's profile as a form of address. In this case, the publication of a comment contains the addressee's self-nomination rather than a form of address. The following two implications arise:

1. The tendency to use nicknames (profile name) or aliases, a common practice of the early-day Facebook, has almost disappeared. Currently, the use of the real name as a profile name is prevalent, and the way it is spelt (using Latin or Cyrillic alphabet; transcribing or transliterating Slavic names and surnames; preserving or eliminating diacritical marks, etc.) characterises its user. For example, the spellings of the names of members of the group *Вікторія Будко*, *Valdemar Skorynkiewicz* preserve the peculiarities of the Ukrainian and Polish script respectively, thereby demonstrating their owners' belonging to a specific linguocultural community.
2. Special mention should be made of non-Lithuanian anthroponyms spelt using the Latin script in the so-called Lithuanian passport version, corresponding to the Guidelines on transcribing Russian personal names and placenames approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language in 1990: *Genadij Černiavskij*, *Igor Čulanov*. Some anthroponyms are further lithuanised by adding Lithuanian endings to the first and last names, marked in bold in the following examples: *Anatolijus Savatovas*, *Georgijus Maksimovas*, etc. Interestingly, rules of transcription of anthroponyms adopted in Lithuania reveal some differences from international transliteration rules and standards by which Slavic names are rendered in Latin script in, say, Russia: compare, for example, the spelling of the last name of the Russian-speaking Lithuanian citizen ***Jerofejev Oleg*** (marked in bold) with the spelling of the same last name in the profile of a person from Moscow related to Lithuania only by work relations: *Leonid Erofeev*. The occurrence of names that are used as self-nomination but are spelled in ways that do not comply with the Lithuanian transcription rules may be significant and indicative either of the non-Lithuanian origin of the group members or of the fact that their personal identification documents were first obtained outside Lithuania<sup>2</sup>.

In this way, the analysis of self-nominations of group members may be relevant not only as part of a study on the uses of zero vocative forms in online communication, but also as part of an analysis of the characteristics of the communicants in particular and the composition of the group in general. In our case, the analysis of self-nominations has revealed the international composition of the Russian-speaking group and the desire to maintain the maximum neutrality of address strategies – in this case, through the use of a profile link as a zero vocative.

### *T-form or V-form?*

The use of the link to a user profile as a zero vocative leaves open the question of the choice of the T- or V-form to be used when addressing the person. As a rule, T- and V- forms of address

<sup>2</sup> Lithuanian legal acts clearly indicate possible deviations from the Lithuanian tradition of transcription whereby foreign names of both citizens and non-citizens of the Lithuanian Republic are written using Latin script, with or without the diacritics, depending on technical possibilities, following the spelling of the person's name in the original document, such as a foreign passport (Garšva 2014). Consequently, spelling names in a way that is inconsistent with Lithuanian transcription norms indicates that they belong to one of the listed exception groups of the Lithuanian population.



are implemented when choosing the appropriate second person pronoun or a form “hidden” imperatives: «Прости/ Простите; Извини/Извините» [T-forgive / V-forgive; T-sorry / V-sorry], etc.

The language behaviour within the group *Вильнюс для всех* / *Vilnius dlia vsex* has revealed that, on the whole, the traditional rules of etiquette, which require addressing an unfamiliar person via a V-form, are preserved in intragroup communication.

### *Gradual loss of formality*

Despite the observance of the rule of etiquette, which requires that the speaker use a V-form addressing unfamiliar people, most users violate the traditional requirement to write the form with a capital letter. This feature corresponds to the general tendency of internet etiquette to abandon the capitalized *You* in favour of the lower-case *you*, as described in section 1.2 above. It should only be noted that the persistent writing of the capitalised *You* in the comments is typical for group members who consistently follow all the grammatical and spelling rules in general and mainly belong to the older or middle-aged generation.

### *Maintaining intimacy*

The transition to T-forms of address in the comments of the group members is accompanied, as a rule, by the use of the hypocoristic anthroponym, often in a truncated form characteristic of oral speech (*Pash* for *Pasha*, *Svet* for *Sveta*, etc.). This use indicates the close acquaintance of communicants, including outside the network space. At the same time, the address can be doubled by the link to the relevant user's profile and a remark, for example:

(2) «**Pavel S.** ([link to profile](#))<sup>3</sup> **Паш**, это конверт с документами»

Hence, the observation of the speech behavior of the group members *Вильнюс для всех* / *Vilnius dlia vsex* suggests that when communicating within a large group with a rather heterogeneous composition, Russian being the only link between the interlocutors, the participants of the communication adhere to the most neutral strategies of address: the use of a link to the profile as a zero vocative and a V-form of address, in which, in accordance with the general trends of Russian network ethics, the lower-case spelling prevails. The most vocal in this respect are the self-naming strategies in the profile of the participants. In general, the use of Russian is de-ethnicised and demonstrates a different level of language proficiency among the group members.

### *ATs in Ad Astra*

Let us consider the findings above in light of the public Facebook group **Ad Astra**, created under the auspices of the Department of Russian Philology of Vilnius University and comprising 230 members (as of March 2020) with the academic and/or creative background.

Communication within this group is devoted primarily to the discussion of literary works of the group members published here. ATs used in the discussions are much more diverse than in the previous group, which indicates greater selectivity among the group members when choosing communication strategies. The main ATs circulating in this group can be summarised as follows:

1. ATs are often personalised and pragmatically loaded, which allows one to speculate about the degree of familiarity and the relations holding between the interlocutors as well as the (non-)inclusion of the addressee into the circle of “us” and “ours”. At the same time, users rarely resort to the profile link of the addressee as a form of address. Even if there is one in the commentary itself, as a rule, a personalised form of address is used:

(7) A. G. writes: **Vitalij K.** ([link to profile](#)) **Виталий**, спасибо, Вы отметили как раз то, что было моей целью - минимализм средств выражения

3 Hereinafter we only provide the initial letter of the last name.

- (8) G. V. writes: **Инна Г.** ([link to profile](#)), как Вам, **Инночка**, 6 января? // А Вам, **Ира**, 5-6 января?
- (9) VU Rusų filologijos katedra writes: **Бируте С.** ([link to profile](#)) Иных уж нет, а те далече, **Бируте Михайловна**.

It is quite telling that the AT *name + patronymic* is actively used within the group, despite the neutral form of polite address by *full name and a V-form* (see survey results). Moreover, it is also possible to see this strategy applied to “non-Russian” names which, due to their origin, are not intended for such use: e.g., *Dagne Yurgiyevna*, *Birute Mikhailovna*, etc. Coupled with the possibility for the alternative use of a single full name or some variant of zero vocative, the AT *name + patronymic* is typical for situations where an additional extralinguistic attribute is in effect: the addressee is included in the closed sphere of “ours” (Rus *наш*), which, in addition to the relations of “intimacy, familiarity, and friendliness”, includes special respect (Formanovskaya, 2007). This use is also indicative of upward vertical relationships, such as student - teacher, junior - senior, etc. When the vector of relations is downward, the inclusion in the circle of “ours” is conveyed through the use of hypocoristic anthroponyms. At the same time, the academic nature of communication is emphasised by accompanying these forms of address with the upper-case V-form. The latter is also the most neutral strategy of address for members of this group. Consequently, there is a strict observance of the rule of writing *You* with a capital letter by the majority of communicants.

2. Another factor in Russian is the abundance of different forms of the name that can be used to refer to the same person, in which case “the socio-stylistic and national-cultural features are noticeably intensified” (Formanovskaya, 2007, p. 205), e.g. *Serega* – familiar, lower style, *Sergiy* – elevated, church style, *Sergei* – neutral and official style, *Serezha* – informal style. Compare ATs of the same person below, used in a discussion of the same publication by different participants of the group (punctuation and pictograms transmitting the emotions are preserved):

(10) I.J. writes: Спасибо, **Галина Павловна**, за этот вечер.

(11) Z.F. writes: Спасибо **Галина** за прекрасный вечер. Столько хороших и умных людей с воспалённым мозгом на квадратный метр ...

(12) I. I. writes: Спасибо Вам огромное, **Галина Павловна!** ❤️ (*a pictogram depicting a heart*).

(13) K. L. writes: **Галина В.** ([link to profile](#)) не цепляйтесь за подробности... **коллега Климовича** )))

These examples clearly demonstrate the pragmatic load of anthroponyms in their vocative use, when the form of the name models the relation of the addresser to the addressee and encodes his/her assessment of the communicative situation. At the same time, the position of the addresser relative to the addressee is modeled, and the reaction of the latter is also overtly expressed. Thus, for instance, K.L.’s violation of the norms of address adopted within the group manifested a break in communication on the part of the addressee and, consequently, solicited a negative assessment by other participants in the discussion:

(14) Г.В. writes: **Константин Л.** ([link to K.L.’s profile](#)) No comments

(15) I. I. writes: **Константин Л.** ([link to K.L.’s profile](#)) зачем грубишь, Костя? 🙄  
(*a pictogram depicting a monkey with its eyes closed*).

3. Within the academic group *Ad Astra*, T-forms are used in situations where the communicants are connected by acquaintance outside the network space and their relationships are aligned horizontally. The relevant T-form is then accompanied not by a hypocoristic name, which would be quite logical, but by the zero vocative:

(16) К. Л. writes (in response to critique): ... другое дело, что новое я читал намного хуже. не насобачился ещё. может, в чем-то **ты** и прав.

(17) V. K. writes (in response to a reproach in the critique): Не разочаровал! Просто я ждал **твоей** классики... Не надо видеть в каждой моей реплике укол или упрёк 😊...

(18) I.I. writes: **Vitalij K.** ([link to profile](#)) спасибо большое, а твоя оценка перемен в тебе и перемен во мне меня «улыбнула» 😊 На мой взгляд перемены **в тебе** гораздо более мощные и значимые.

It is noteworthy that when using the T-form verbal behaviour becomes much more relaxed: remarks are often accompanied by emoticons, comments are supplemented by stylistically coloured evaluative vocabulary, such as *nasobachilsya* (jarg. [he] mastered, excelled at sth, *it smiled* (intended “he/she smiled”), the rules of punctuation are not always followed, etc. But contrary to responses in (14-15), such features do not cause any negative reaction between the interlocutors.

Thus, the academic philological community of the *Ad Astra* group is characterised by the desire to comply with the norms of Russian speech etiquette in vertical communication, as well as to personalise communication as much as possible through ATs, which encode the degree of acquaintance of interlocutors, their relationship and the inclusion/non-inclusion of the addressee in the circle of “us”.

Finally, in the broader context, the findings of our study have implications for further research in light of the notions of *enregistrement*, a process through which language forms become regularly associated with and consequently recognised as indexical of a regional or social group of speakers (Agha, 2003) and *pluricentricity*, following its loose definition as a special case of language-internal variation, marked by questions of national identity and power (Kristiansen, 2014, p. 2), which is characterised not by norms, but rather by “clusters of usual behaviours in geographically and/or socially characterized communities” (Lüdi, 2014, p. 49), and viewing Russian in Lithuania as a regional variant of standard Russian (see also Berdicevskis, 2014; Kamusella, 2018; Sinochkina, 2018; Verschik, 2008; 2016).

## Conclusions

The study concerned the use of ATs among Russian-speaking ethnic minority in Lithuania. The analysis proceeded at two levels: at the level of offline communication, examining the more traditional contexts of daily communication, and analysis of strategies of address used by Russian speaking population in a number of groups on Facebook. The survey has revealed negative marking of the AT *name + patronymic* and a tendency for replacing this form with *full first name + V-form*. The analysis of speech behavior on Facebook has revealed two main strategies of address largely stipulated by the nature of the group:

1. In mixed groups, the zero vocative is the dominant AT, while traditional rules of etiquette, requiring addressing a stranger through a V-form, are preserved in intragroup communication. Consequently, communication in such groups does not presuppose the elimination of conventions or preference for the T-form address. Transition to T-forms of address indicates close acquaintance between the communicants and is usually accompanied by the use of a hypocoristic anthroponym.
2. In the academic community of Russian philologists, the norms of Russian speech etiquette, including the use of the formula *name + patronymic*, are preserved. The choice of the AT depends on the vector of relationships in the offline space: the V-form of address used with a hypocoristic anthroponym is a means of expression of respect in the downward relationships; the address by *full name + patronymic* is an expression of respect in the upward relationships. In addition, the technologies form a factor themselves: the use of the link to a person's profile

instead of the address *per se* is viewed as a form of a zero vocative, albeit supplemented with a new function: the link to profile serves as a notification to the addressee that he or she has been mentioned or cited.

In the broader context, the findings of our study have implications for further research along two dimensions. One dimension concerns bridging the gap between two methodological approaches, as manifested through the use of the terms *speech etiquette* and *politeness*. In our analysis, we have sought to show how the former can be effectively applied within and captured by the latter. The other dimension concerns the process and phenomenon of *enregisterment* of Russian of Lithuania as a regional standard variety, thereby contributing to the body of research on the metapragmatic values circulating among Russian speakers in the post-Soviet space and, more generally, on Russian as a pluricentric language.

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## Appendix 1

### Questionnaire of the offline survey

1. Возраст: 18-25; 26-35; 36-45; 46-55; 56-65; 66+
2. Пол
3. Образование: среднее; среднее специальное; незаконченное высшее; высшее; другое
4. Сфера деятельности: экономика и финансы; здравоохранение; образование и наука; информационные технологии; право; арт и медиа; обслуживание; менеджмент; другое
5. Как долго живете в Литве:
  - i. Вы родились и проживаете в Литве;
  - ii. от 5 до 10 лет;
  - iii. больше 10 лет;
  - iv. больше 20 лет;
  - v. другое
6. Как часто Вы следите за новостями: смотрите/слушаете новости по ТВ/радио, читаете в газетах и новостных порталах?
  - i. каждый день;
  - ii. 2-3 раза в неделю;
  - iii. 1 раз в неделю;
  - iv. реже одного раза в неделю;
  - v. новостями не интересуюсь; другое
7. Новости представлены:
  - i. на русском языке;
  - ii. на литовском языке;
  - iii. на литовском и русском;
  - iv. чаще на русском, чем литовском языке;
  - v. чаще на литовском, чем русском языке.
  - vi. другое
8. Если Вы общаетесь с русскоязычным собеседником только на официальном уровне, как Вы к нему обратитесь в присутствии как литовско-, так и русскоязычных коллег?
  - i. заговорю по-литовски, обращусь по имени;
  - ii. заговорю по-литовски, обращусь по имени-отчеству;
  - iii. заговорю по-русски, обращусь по имени;
  - iv. заговорю по-русски, обращусь по имени-отчеству;
  - v. заговорю по-литовски, постараюсь никак не называть собеседника в разговоре;
  - vi. заговорю по-русски, постараюсь никак не называть собеседника в разговоре
9. Если Вы общаетесь с русскоязычным собеседником только на официальном уровне, как Вы будете к нему обращаться в присутствии других русскоязычных коллег?
  - i. по имени на «ты»;
  - ii. по имени на «Вы»;
  - iii. по имени-отчеству на «ты»;
  - iv. по имени-отчеству на «Вы»;
  - v. постараюсь никак не называть
10. В неформальной/повседневной рабочей обстановке, как Вы будете обращаться к своему русскоязычному собеседнику в присутствии как литовско-, так и русскоязычных коллег?
  - i. по имени на «ты»;
  - ii. по имени на «Вы»;
  - iii. по имени-отчеству на «ты»;
  - iv. по имени-отчеству на «Вы»;
  - v. если он/она меня старше, постараюсь никак не называть, буду обращаться на «Вы»
  - vi. если он/она меня старше, добавлю слово «тетя», «дядя» (тетя Маша, дядя Коля)
11. Говоря по-русски, Вы иногда переходите на литовский или вставляете литовские слова: Да; Нет

12. В официальном письме русскоязычному коллеге, как Вы к нему обратитесь?
  - i. по имени на «ты»;
  - ii. по имени на «Вы»;
  - iii. по имени-отчеству на «ты»;
  - iv. по имени-отчеству на «Вы»;
  - v. постараюсь никак не обращаться, а только поздороваюсь
13. В дружеском письме русскоязычному знакомому, как Вы к нему обратитесь?  
(если нужно, прокомментируйте под ответами)
  - i. по имени на «ты»;
  - ii. по имени на «Вы»;
  - iii. по имени-отчеству на «ты»;
  - iv. по имени-отчеству на «Вы»;
  - v. если он/она меня старше, постараюсь никак не называть, буду обращаться на «Вы» (Здравствуйте, наконец пишу...);
  - vi. если он/она меня старше, добавлю слово «тетя», «дядя» (тетя Маша, дядя Коля)
  - vii. другое
14. Бывали ли у Вас случаи, когда, зная имя и отчество собеседника, Вы предпочли обратиться по имени? Да/Нет
15. Считаете ли Вы себя оптимистом?  
да; скорее да, чем нет; скорее нет, чем да; нет
16. При знакомстве, представитесь ли Вы по имени-отчеству?  
да; да, если кто-нибудь до меня представится по имени-отчеству;  
скорее нет; нет; и так и так - все зависит от моего настроения
17. Согласны ли Вы со следующим утверждением: «В Литве форма обращения по имени-отчеству может доставлять дискомфорт». Да/Нет
18. Согласны ли Вы с утверждением: «В Литве форма обращения по имени-отчеству при общении на русском языке подчеркивает социальный статус человека, к которому так обращаются». Да/Нет
19. Согласны ли Вы со следующим утверждением: В Литве форма обращения на «Вы» и ПО ИМЕНИ, независимо от дистанции между собеседниками, равносильна обращению на «Вы!» и по ИМЕНИ-ОТЧЕСТВУ, т.е.: Послушайте, Николай = Послушайте, Николай Петрович...  
Да; скорее да, чем нет; скорее нет, чем да; нет

## Appendix 2

### Russian-speaking groups of Lithuania on the social networking site Facebook

#### Main groups (source of data)

1. **Вильнюс для всех:) /Vilnius dlia vsex );**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/501702489979518/about/>  
Vilnius for everyone :) (written in Russian and Lithuanian). Until 20 June 2019, the group was named *Русские в Вильнюсе и другие не русские:)) /Russkije/Rusai ir ne tik* [Russians in Vilnius and other non-Russians:)]  
The group was created on 12 July 2015. It comprised 7411 members in March 2019 and 12 100 members in late March 2020.
2. **Ad Astra;** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1974421849548202/>  
The group was created on 14 December 2017. It comprised 197 members in March 2019 and 230 members in late March 2020

## Other Russian-speaking groups of Lithuania on Facebook

3. Русская Литва EU; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/russkielitvy/>
4. Русскоязычные жители Литвы russians.lt LT RU; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/russians.lt/>  
Until 16 February 2020 the group was named Русские Литвы/ russians.lt [Russians of Lithuania]
5. Литва по-русски (доска бесплатных объявлений, работа, услуги, реклама); обновленное название ЛИТВА и вся ПРИБАЛТИКА! доска бесплатных объявлений/ работа/услуги/реклама; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1499177200373717/>
6. Русские в Литве; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/207243089736749/>;
7. Вильнюс - Vilnius # Русские # Белорусы # Украинцы #; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/russianreklama.litva/>  
Until 18 February 2020 the group was named Русские - Белорусы - Украинцы [Russians-Belarusians-Ukrainians]
8. Литва по-русски. Русскоязычный форум в Литве; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/358944514277157/>
9. RU/LT: русскоязычное комьюнити в Литве; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/797564740286695/>
10. --Русские Литвы-- ; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1156608747779131/>
11. Литва. Русское европейское движение; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/303541240086579/>

## Appendix 3

### Translation of citations

1. Our goal is to create a large information community for Russian-speaking residents of Lithuania, in which everyone can find answers to questions of interest, meet interesting people, stay up-to-date with important events, find out information about ongoing events, concerts and exhibitions (description of the group *Русскоязычные жители Литвы russians.lt LT RU; Russian-speaking residents of Lithuania russians.lt LT RU*);
2. This group was created so that we could communicate and exchange information with You, including through social networks. Today this is a very effective source of information for many ... Share events, just information, so that we are aware of what is happening in the Russian-speaking environment in Lithuania "(description of the group *Вильнюс - Vilnius # Русские # Белорусы # Украинцы #*; *Vilnius - Vilnius # Russians # Belarusians # Ukrainians #*);
3. A group for Russians living in Lithuania. It was created for the exchange of information in various fields of activity: science, culture, education, tourism, etc. As well as for the exchange of views and ideas (description of the group in *Русские в Литве; Russians in Lithuania*)
4. The group was created in order to communicate and be able to share information. The main thing is to remain human. All Russian speakers welcome (description of the group *Вильнюс для всех:) /Vilnius dlia vsex /; Vilnius for everyone :) / Vilnius dlia vsex*)
5. The group was created in order to communicate and share information. The main thing is to remain human. All Russian speakers welcome
6. *Pavel S. (link to profile) Pash, this is an envelope with documents.*

7. A. G. writes: *Vitalij K. (link to profile) Vitalij, thank you, you have pointed out exactly what was my goal – minimalism of expression means.*
8. G. V. writes: *Inna G. (link to profile) **Innochka**, what do you think of January 6th? // And you, **Ira**, of 5-6 January?*
9. VU Rusų filologijos katedra (En Vilnius University Russian Philology Department) writes: *Бурyme C. (link to profile) Some are no longer here, and others even further away, **Birute Mikhailovna**.*
10. Inna J. writes: *Thank you, **Galina Pavlovna**, for this evening.*
11. Zizo F. writes: *Thank you **Galina** for the wonderful evening. So many good and intelligent people with infected mind per square meter...*
12. Irina I. writes: *Thank you very much, **Galina Pavlovna!** ❤️ (a pictogram depicting a heart).*
13. Константин Л. writes: *Galina V. (link to profile) don't get hooked on details... **a colleague of Klimovich** )))*
14. Галина В. writes: *Konstantin L. (link to K.L.'s profile) No comments.*
15. Irina I. writes: ***Konstantin L.** (link to K.L.'s profile) why are you being rude, Kostia? 🙄 (a pictogram depicting a monkey with its eyes closed).*
16. К. Л. writes (in response to critique): *... the point is that the new I read was much worse. Have not got a knack of it yet. **T-you** may be right somewhere.*
17. V. K. writes (in response to a reproach in the critique): *You haven't disappointed me! I just was waiting for **T-your** classics... One shouldn't see a reproach in every comment of mine 😊...*
18. (18) I.I. writes: *Vitalij K. (link to profile) thank you very much, and **T-your** assessment of changes **in T-you** and changes in me "smiled" me 😊 In my opinion, changes in **T-you** are much more powerful and significant.*